



Sustain This!

News, tips & tools from Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment



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BEST City Project

At the Business and Industry Resource Venture's recent Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow (BEST) awards ceremony, a City project (the Fisher Flag Pavilion remodel at Seattle Center) won in the green building category. It was one of a number of inspiring examples of businesses and other institutions that are working to simultaneously improve their financial and environmental bottom lines; other winners included Starbucks, the Mariners, and Seattle University.

Cleaner School Buses

The State legislature adopted the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's (PSCAA) proposed "clean air fee" to fund a program to reduce diesel emissions from school buses. The bill provides \$25 million to local agencies over a five year period. PSCAA will receive about \$1.5 million annually from the bill with 85 percent earmarked for school bus retrofits and clean fuels. The remaining 15 percent will be used for air toxics monitoring and other air cleanup activities. The funding is coming from an existing title transfer fee which is being dedicated to this purpose until it sunsets in 2008.

Saving Seattle's Shoreline

In April, Mayor Nickels announced that the City would not pursue a Magnolia bridge replacement alternative that includes a road along the base of the Magnolia Bluff. Neighborhood leaders concerned about the shoreline and waterfront praised the decision. "We will replace the Magnolia Bridge, but not along Seattle's precious shoreline," Nickels said.

Greening Affordable Housing

Seattle's Office of Housing (OH) received 18 applications for funds from the 2002 housing levy. The \$7.5 million to be awarded should fund 3-5 projects. All applicants were required to submit a sustainability plan, using OH's recently published sustainable building guide and checklist - SeaGreen. In other housing news, Traugott Terrace, 50 units of low income housing, and a US Green Building Council LEED™ certified project opens this summer. The project went above and beyond LEED™ requirements, for example, installing an energy efficient elevator and Forest Stewardship Council certified wood for framing.

Clean Green City Fleets

The City of Seattle recently launched a new initiative to increase the use of alternative fuels and improve the fuel efficiency of the City's fleet of 3,200 cars and trucks. Under the new "Clean Green Fleet Action Plan," at least half of all compact cars purchased by the city will use cleaner-burning alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas, or get at least 45 miles per gallon. Policies related to heavy-duty vehicles include the use of biodiesel and ultra-low sulfur diesel and the reduction of vehicle idling. "Ultimately, our goal is a 100-percent clean and green fleet," said Mayor Greg Nickels. The City plans to complete a cost-benefit analysis by the end of the year to determine the best mix of fuels and vehicles, and the appropriate timeline for meeting the goal."

Check it out!

The recently released [Moving Toward Sustainability 2002](#) - reports on the City of Seattle's progress toward meeting the goals of the Mayor's Environmental Action Agenda.

Washington State Department of Ecology has published a [field guide to sustainability](#) - an introduction to sustainability concepts and a framework for decision making.

Check out the "[Resource Guide on Sustainable Development in an Urban Environment](#)". The guide was developed by leading architects and the Urban Environmental Institute and sponsored by Vulcan Inc. It provides a roadmap for sustainable development using the principles and technologies being explored by developers and the City for South Lake Union.

[Biodiesel and ethanol legislation](#) passed by the state of Washington will benefit both the economy through new industry growth and the environment through cleaner air.

Facts & Figures

Can a housing development project address environmental and social goals and still be profitable? Yes, argues the Rocky Mountain Institute in "Doing Well by Doing Good: The Benefits of Green Development."

The Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team's "Natural Approaches to Stormwater Management: Low Impact Development in Puget Sound" features several City projects, including Seattle Public Utilities natural drainage and rainwater harvesting work, and the Justice Center green roof.

Seattle's pilot Street Edge Alternatives (SEA Street) is designed to provide drainage that more closely mimics the natural hydrology prior to development compared to traditional piped systems. Two years of monitoring show that SEA Street has reduced the total volume of stormwater leaving the street by 98 percent for a 2-year storm event.

Check out OSE's calendar of events at www.cityofseattle.net/environment/whatsnew.htm

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A New Sustainable High Point in Seattle

What if a property owner in Seattle had 120 acres and the opportunity to remove all buildings, roads and utilities and start over? Can smart growth, low-impact development and green building principles and practices be applied together to create a model sustainable community redevelopment?

This opportunity now exists here in Seattle. The property owner is Seattle Housing Authority (SHA), and the project is High Point, a redevelopment in West Seattle. SHA, teaming up with Mithun Architects, SvR Design and the City of Seattle, is seeking to establish a national model for a mixed-income sustainable community.

Features of the community will include deconstruction of a large number of existing structures, a natural drainage system, green building techniques, healthy homes, and a "new urbanist" mixed-use, mixed-income design.

Deconstruction

In two phases, SHA will remove 747 housing units that are beyond their useful lives. Using conventional demolition methods (bulldozing), the construction waste would equal 66,000 cubic yards – enough debris to cover all eight lanes of I-90 18 feet deep for a third of a mile. Thomas Nielsen, SHA's Construction Manager for High Point, is proposing dismantling buildings to create jobs and to allow for the recovery of reusable components (up to 28,000 sheets of plywood alone).

Nation's Largest Natural System Drainage

The 120 acres comprise ten percent of the Longfellow Creek watershed, home of Seattle's largest Coho salmon return. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is planning to install the nation's largest **natural system drainage**, featuring a network of swales and modified planting strips to treat storm water at its source. As a result of the natural processes emulated by this system, the quality and quantity of storm water entering Longfellow Creek will resemble pre-development conditions.

Green Building

Mithun Architects, one of Seattle's leading sustainable building firms, is designing water- and energy-efficient housing that has high indoor air quality and uses significant quantities of local, re-used and recycled materials. The design strives to achieve water efficiency that exceeds code requirements by as much as 30 percent and energy efficiency as much as 50 percent.

Healthy Homes

In addition to including green building features in all units, 50 homes will be designed from the ground up to accommodate the needs of chemically sensitive and/or asthmatic residents. These High Point 'Healthy Homes' will control and reduce contaminant sources, provide adequate ventilation, and include procedures for ongoing protection of indoor air quality.

Mixed Use, Mixed Income Design

With a network of pocket, neighborhood, and community parks, a retail center, elementary school, community center, library, health clinic and senior center, High Point residents will have a wide range of services within walking distance and a new, improved connection to the Legacy Trail along Longfellow Creek. The site has been designed to preserve 110 existing historic and landmark trees and over 2,500 new trees will be planted. Blocks will be short, streets will be designed for slow traffic, and homes will face streets to reduce crime and to increase a sense of community. Low-income and market-rate housing will be interspersed. Density will be at about 13 dwelling units per acre, including the open space.

For more information on this ground breaking model of sustainable urban development go to [Seattle Housing Authority's website](http://seattlehousingauthority.org).